

Augusta Regional Transportation Study Newsletter

Issue 26

January 2006

Transportation Law Enacted

On August 10, 2005, President Bush signed into law the **Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users** (SAFETEA-LU). With guaranteed funding for highways, highway safety, and public transportation totaling \$244.1 billion, SAFETEA-LU represents the largest surface transportation investment in U.S. history. The two landmark bills that brought surface transportation into the 21st century—the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)—shaped the highway program to meet the Nation's changing transportation needs. SAFETEA-LU builds on this firm foundation, supplying the funds and refining the programmatic framework for investments needed to maintain and grow our vital transportation infrastructure.

Source: FHWA Website

TIP Update

The time is drawing near to begin work on the annual update of the ARTS Transportation Improvement Program. The TIP is a staged, multi-year, intermodal program of transportation projects consistent with the ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan. The updated TIP will cover a three-year period (FY 2007-2009) for the Georgia part of the study area, and a five-year period (2007-2011) for the South Carolina part of the study area.

The process begins with a comparison of priority transportation needs to available funding levels. The draft TIP will be developed for review by the ARTS committees in March. The public review period will follow in April, and the committees will review the final TIP in May and June. Implementation begins in July and is done cooperatively by all stakeholders. During the course of implementation, it may be necessary to amend the TIP in response to changes in the scope, cost or priority of projects. Please contact ARTS staff with any questions or comments you have regarding the update of the TIP.

Railroad & Road Improvements

CSX Railroad is getting ready to start a major project in our area. Starting in mid-February, CSX is going to replace all the crossties, approximately 250,00 of the on the line that runs from the Laney-Walker Blvd rail yard westward to Dearing, Georgia.

The intersection improvement project at Mike Padgett Hwy and Goshen Road is complete. The traffic signal equipment has been installed at the intersection, as well as left and right turn lanes. In addition, a deceleration lane has been added in each direction.

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ARTS MEETINGS

ARTS committee meetings are usually held on the 8th Floor of the Municipal Building at 530 Greene Street, Augusta, GA. Please call the ARCPC (706) 821-1796 to verify time and place.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

The Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission website includes all ARTS committee agendas and related transportation planning information. The address is:

http://www.augustaga.gov/departments/planning_zoning/

Palmetto Parkway Update

A Request for Proposals (RFP) has been issued by SC DOT for construction of Phase II of the Palmetto Parkway. According to Program Manager Michael Meetze, the RFP was issued on Friday, January 6, 2006. A pre-proposal meeting is scheduled for January 18th and proposals will be due to SC DOT on or about March 10th. SC DOT expects to select a contractor for the \$140 million, design-build project by March 31st.

Phase II of the Palmetto Parkway (I-520) will extend for 6.5 miles between U.S. Highway 1 and the Interstate 20 / U.S. 25 interchange in North Augusta. The project includes four interchanges – U.S. 1, SC 125/Belvedere-Clearwater Road, US 25 at Ascauga Lake Road and I-20 - and a five-mile multipurpose lane for bikers and walkers. The multipurpose lane will be separated from the parkway by a 6-foot chain-link fence and will have potential connections to the North Augusta Greenway at several locations.

The project is expected to alleviate traffic congestion in North Augusta, redirect truck traffic around the city, foster regional economic development and enhance the use of alternative modes of transportation. The project is being financed with a combination of federal, state and local funds. The project is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2008.

Georgia Specialty License Plate

Don't miss your chance to promote bicycling and help fund bicyclist and motorist safety programs!

Beginning on Tuesday, January 3, county tag offices across the state will begin accepting applications for the **Georgia SHARE THE ROAD specialty license plate**.

You can apply either in-person or by-mail. For information on how to apply, please see Georgia Bikes! website <http://www.georgiabikes.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=80> or the Georgia Dept of Motor Vehicles <http://www.dmv.ga.gov/motor/plates/plate.asp?ptitle=RD>

The DMV must receive at least 1000 applications for the tags by December 31, 2007, otherwise they will not be manufactured. The manufacturing is \$25 (which would be refunded in the event 1000 orders are not placed by 12/31/07). All of the \$25.00 fees charged for the issuance of these plates shall be utilized, subject to the general appropriation process, by the Governor's Highway Safety Program to improve bicycle and motorist safety through education and awareness efforts.

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation

Frequently Called Numbers

- GDOT Area Office – Augusta (706) 855-3466
- GDOT District Two Office – Tennille (478) 552-4601
- SC DOT - Aiken County Maintenance Shop (803) 642-7600
- Augusta Public Works and Engineering Dept. (706) 796-5040
- Augusta Traffic Engineering Division (706) 821-1841
- Columbia County Road Construction Dept. (706) 541-4011
- Columbia County Roads and Bridges Dept. (706) 541-1143
- Augusta Public Transit (706) 821-1721
- Aiken County Transit (Best Friend Express) (803) 648-6493

Congratulations

We congratulate Cristhine Kraft, GIS Planner for the Augusta Richmond County Planning Commission, and her family, on the birth of Elizabeth Kraft on Thursday December 29, 2005.

Augusta Canal Update

The Atlanta Gas Light's clean up of the coal tar from their former gas manufacturing plant on the Augusta Canal's urban Third Level is nearing its final stage. An agreement with the CXS Railroad negotiated in April 2005 removed the final hurdle by allowing the City to temporarily relocate the CSX mainline to remove and replace the culverts in the canal. This work is scheduled for completion in May 2006. When completed the third level will be fully re-watered turning what was once a stagnant pool into a flowing water amenity that local officials believe will serve as a catalyst for redevelopment of the area. The Canal Authority has applied for a DOT Transportation Enhancement grant to fund continuation of the multiuse trail along the canal's third level

Alpha Construction continues work on a number of projects at the Headgates. The Gatehouse and Lock refurbishment is complete. Repairs to the diversion dam (the V-shaped structure in the Savannah River that guides water into the top of the canal) are underway. The Reed Creek pedestrian bridge is due to be installed this winter as will nearby steps leading from the upper canal bank to the Savannah River. Columbia County officials have completed the retention wall and landscaping in front of the Lockkeeper's Cottage and plan to begin parking and road improvements soon.

Source: Rebecca B. Rogers, Director of Marketing & External Affairs, Augusta Canal Authority

Personnel Changes

Keith Rollings, a retired GDOT District Traffic Engineer, is now with CH2MHILL. One of his responsibilities is to assist the Augusta Engineering Department with the implementation of road improvement projects.

Cindy Coddington, formerly with the Augusta Traffic Engineering Department, is now with the city of Savannah.

Peggy Hendrix has left her job as Enhancement Program Coordinator with the South Carolina Department of Transportation. Ms. Cathy Rice and Ms. Yolanda Simons are the new contacts for the program.

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JANUARY 2006
NO MEETINGS
FEBRUARY 2006
CAC/TCC – FEB 8 TH 10:00 A.M. ENDORSE DRAFT UPWP
MARCH 2006
POLICY – MARCH 2 ND , ENDORSE DRAFT TIP CAC/TCC – MARCH 8 TH ENDORSE DRAFT TIP

The ARTS Staff

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2006 ARTS CALENDAR

CAC & TCC Meetings

**10:00 am, Wednesday
February 8, 2006
Endorse Final UPWP**

**10:00 am, Wednesday
March 8, 2006
Endorse Draft TIP**

**10:00 am, Wednesday
May 10, 2006
TIP Public Meeting &
Endorse Final TIP**

**10:00 am, Wednesday
August 9, 2006**

**10:00 am, Wednesday
September 13, 2006**

**10:00 am, Wednesday
November 8, 2006
Endorse Draft UPWP**

**10:00 am, Wednesday
December 13, 2006**

Policy Committee Meetings

**11:00 am, Thursday
March 2, 2006
Endorse Draft TIP &
Final UPWP**

**11:00 am, Thursday
June 1, 2006
Endorse Final TIP**

**11:00 am, Thursday
September 7, 2006**

**11:00 am, Thursday
December 7, 2006
Endorse Draft UPWP**